

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2000

VIA HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Charles Jeffress
Assistant Secretary of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
Room S-2315
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Assistant Secretary Jeffress:

With considerable bemusement, we noticed your recent comments as reported in the March 13, 2000 issue of Congress Daily that "no member of Congress has filed formal comments" on the proposed ergonomics standard. As we have both done so, we are left to wonder whether you are aware of our current status or if you were merely unaware of our comments. For your convenience, we have enclosed our comments that have been filed in this docket.

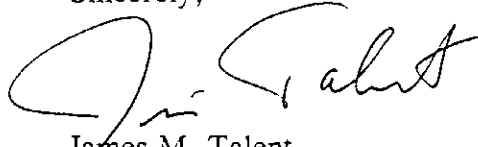
If the latter is the case, this raises the specter that OSHA will not thoroughly review the comments that have been received. Your repeated statements and those of Secretary Herman's that OSHA intends to have this rule finalized during this year suggest the agency has already decided not to take into account the voluminous record established in this very controversial proceeding. Furthermore, given the number of comments the agency has received, the volume of testimony that will be submitted through the public hearings, and the length and detailed analysis of many of these submissions, we find it hard to believe that the agency can complete this rulemaking this year without ignoring the concerns and suggestions contained in those submissions. Certainly, a new preamble that would address the comments in detail would require more months to draft and review than are available if this rule is to be finalized this year and the comments are to be read and considered on their merits.

Please respond to us by April 7 with an explanation of how OSHA can complete this rulemaking this year while still giving all the comments received their due consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Bond", written in a cursive style.

Christopher Bond
Chairman
Senate Small Business Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Talent", written in a cursive style.

James M. Talent
Chairman
House Small Business Committee

Enclosures